Nzame has much work in his village, but he does not disdain to enjoy himself. He causes tomtom dances to be performed on the sky, and the noise of the dancers' feet is called thunder. From time to time also, when there is an eclipse, it is Nzame who takes pleasure in frightening people by plunging them into darkness at midday.

II. The evur. The evur or evus (plural, bivur) appears to be an individual spirit which plays a fundamental role in the life of the Pahouin. Not all persons have an evur. To have an evur, one must have received it from a person who has one. Such a person is called nem (plural, beyem). A child in the foetal state carried by its mother [69] can receive an evur even without the knowledge of the mother. One can tell by its weight that a newborn has an evur; only a nem, on lifting a child in his arms, can say that he has felt the weight of the evur, imperceptible to anyone else.

If at its birth a child has no evur, it can then receive one. The evur given it is either good (evur mve) or evil (evur abí).

(1) Good evur. In the case of a good evur, the donor of this evur, who is always an elder of the tribe, comes often to see the child until the latter can count to ten, that is to say, at about seven or eight years of age. At this time the child is considered intelligent enough to understand what is expected of him, and then the ceremony called akaġa is performed.

All the beyem of the village are invited to meet at a tree called ovaṅ (Didelotia africana), chosen from among all the others as the fetish tree because of its size, its longevity, and its resistance to tornadoes. The child is brought there; then the donor of the evur, in the presence of the assembled beyem, pronounces the wishes which he makes for the child's future. He wishes him wealth, strength, success, in general all that which will make him happy. For little girls the wishes are more particularly that they may later have many children, that they may be strong for their planting tasks, and that they may be esteemed by the other wives of their future husbands.

A kind of soup called nam akaġa, the preparation of which is secret, is made on the occasion of this ceremony. Each time the donor of the evur makes a wish, the child must take a little nam. For example, if the wish is for him to have ten wives, this is made with the following words:

e mon ni, nam ma ke we wi oluġ bunega awum
That child, the soup I give you here marries ten wives,

776 and he must take ten spoonfuls of soup. Similarly, he will eat a
852 spoonful for each child wished for. As to the other wishes, wealth, strength, courage, esteem, etc., these necessitate eating all that is left in the pot. This large quantity of soup signifies that the wish made is for an immeasurable amount of whatever is desired.

776 The night following the ceremony of akaga, the bivur of the beyem who have been present leave the bodies of their possessors in order to hold an invisible meeting called ngwel. This is the only time that the ngwel does not have a completely malevolent action, since otherwise the bivur never meet except to do evil. The ngwel which follows the akaga confirms the wishes made for the child and promises to protect his evur until it is strong enough; in fact, the evur grows with the child and does not reach its full vitality until the child is an adult. The ngwel [70] also shows the new member what part of the body he must remove from the person he will later sacrifice, in order to make a fetish. This sacrifice is made in gratitude to the bivur who concerned themselves with him during the akaga.

776 Every time an evur leaves the body for a ngwel, it is injured and
784 fatigued, and can only be restored with human blood. After the ngwel, which follows the akaga, the bivur who have taken part in this weakened state and, when they have finished attending to the wishes made for the child, they ask the evur of the person who invited them to point out the victim they must eat for their recovery. An old man of the paternal or maternal family is usually designated for this purpose. Lacking such a person, the nem who bestowed the evur may sacrifice himself. If he does not consent, the assembled bivur place a prohibition (eki) on the child. For example, if ten wives have been wishes for him, he is forbidden on pain of death to take an eleventh; or else he is forbidden, always on pain of death, to eat certain foods or to do, or allow such and such a thing to be done. When the prohibition is of little importance, death in case of infraction may be replaced by the good evur transforming into an evil one.

Respect for the prohibitions and faith in their power is so firmly fixed in the minds of all the Pahouins that one who has violated a prohibition of akaga is sure to die, and without external intervention.

784 A Protestant missionary of the Samkita station cited to us the case
158 of a twelve-year-old child, a boarding pupil of the mission, who was

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in all this part of central Africa, where the ox is unknown because of trypanosomiasis.

the produce of hunting and fishing, and these exist until the time of puberty. They signify, according to L. Martrou, that in the family group there should be "no useless mouth," ..."but rather arms and hearts capable of defending and enriching it." (2) Thus

2. L. Martrou, Les "Ékis" des Mfang [The "Ékis" of the Fang] op. cit.

[834] it is forbidden to cohabit with a woman before being circumcized (3)

3. V. Largeau, op. cit. article: Interdit [Interdict].

541 In the same way various rites mark the steps of this ascent: the
578 rite of the Ssò for the ten-year-old children; (4) circumcision,
[852
881]

4. M. Bertaut in his thesis on the Boulou of the Cameroons, a related nation, speaks of a less degraded form of the Ssò which was the center of a true "society of men" now almost vanished.

which is not accompanied by any initiation (but seems rather to bear public witness to virility and to show the individual as an active male), and above all, the "revelation" of the Biéri. When
541 the young man joins the company of men, he has experienced in
578 various degrees of intensity [153] this biological, social, and
885 spiritual dependence on his ancestors (mvam) and on his elders (nyamòrò). To them he owes his life, his security, his social existence. Even after having crossed the various steps and being able to take full part in the assembly of men, he receives from

the évu or the animal employed as assistant being killed during a skirmish, which would bring about the nnem's death.

Many people nevertheless regard these disadvantages as weighing little against the immediate advantages which the évu procures. Therefore some bemie (people without évu) have themselves initiated into ngbwel, and some beyem dedicate their children from birth (which has the additional effect of protecting them against the parent's évu). For this purpose beyem organize into secret societies (and these are really secret societies), well described by Trilles and particularly so by Lavignotte (no. 155).

Babies are dedicated by a mnem kinsman in a ceremony, aka'é, before the umbilicus is healed (the évu is believed to enter through the umbilical lesion). A special taboo is imposed on the child, and a part of his body (finger, toe or even foot, hand or whole arm) is symbolically sacrificed to the évu with a slight letting of blood. From that time on, only the shade of the sacrificed part, its semblance, is believed to continue to exist. The child is then nkôman ngbwel /118/, prepared for the ngbwel, but he is not yet a nnem; if he were it would be discovered at the preliminary stage of the adolescent initiation, and he would be put to death. It is only at the time of initiation with the official rites that he becomes a sorcerer, kuli ngbwel, through a further ceremony during which his "godparents" reveal to him that he has been "prepared," dedicated. He must then buy back the bodily part "sacrificed" at the aka'é by offering his "godparents" the body of a member of his family, killed and eaten by the beyem in circumstances about which little is known. What is known suggests some of the sexual aspects of European witches' sabbaths (apparently participants of both sexes, naked, practiced sodomy, bisôk, and profaned the ancestral relics, probably fragments of bieti). The initiation of an adult consists only of the akuli ngbwel, the aka'é being restricted to children.

Beyem meet periodically, aside from initiation ceremonies, in order to "feed the bivu" in anthropophagous or necrophagous meals accompanied by obscene rituals. These meetings take place at the new moon in secret places in the forest, usually in clearings on top of hills or on islands in marshes — mmimie are afraid of stumbling by chance on one of these spots which, according to some of my informants, are guarded between meetings by an aardvark, mvômesila. If such a place is discovered, a nnengañ is immediately called in to perform a sort of exorcism.